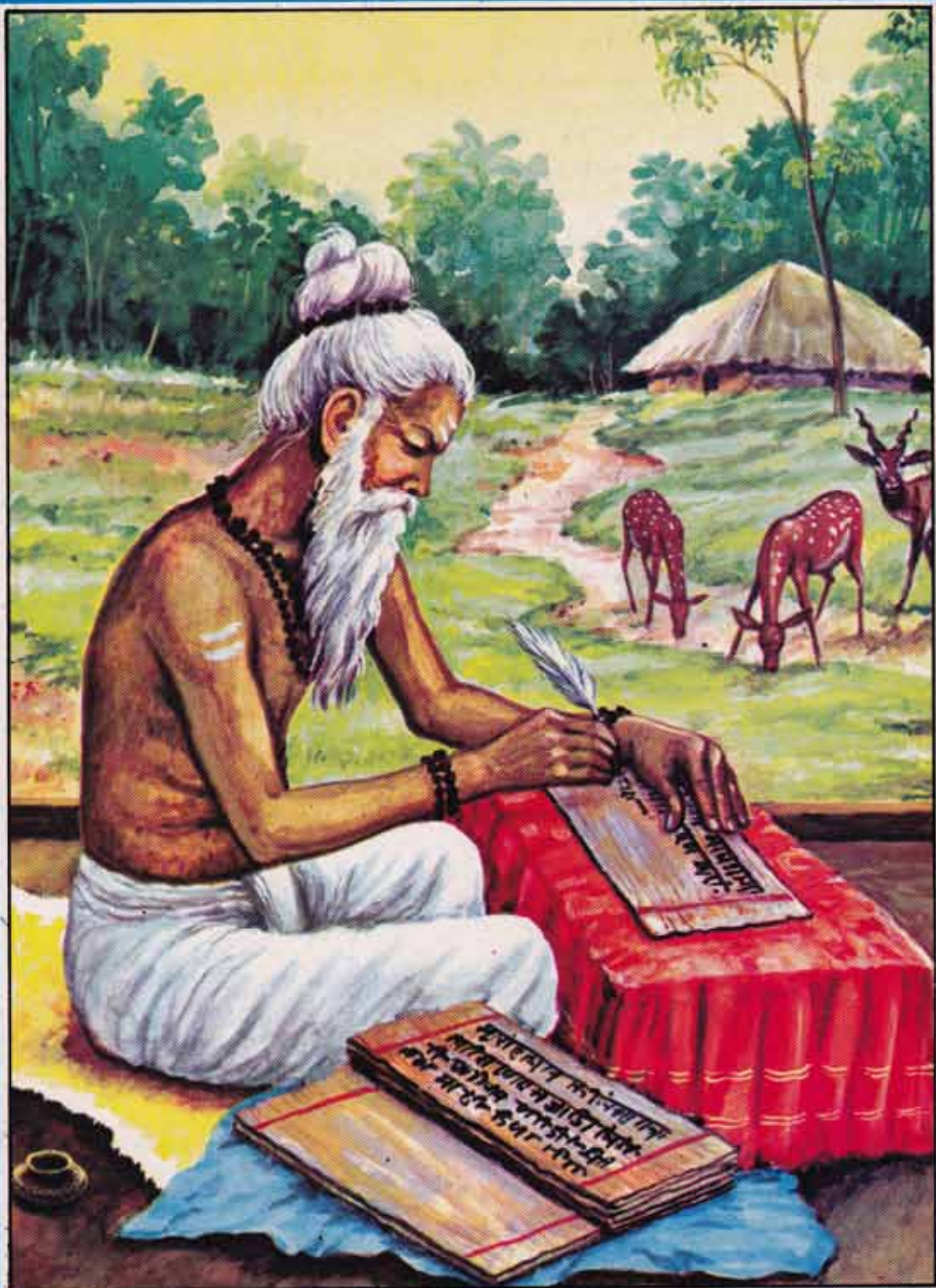




Vol. 579 Rs. 20

Valmiki

The story of the author of the epic, "Ramayana"



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Valmiki

To Valmiki, we Indians owe a deeper debt of gratitude than to any other poet. He gave us the Ramayana, one of the most fascinating stories of all time. No words can describe the hold the Ramayana has had on the people of India from ancient times to the present day. It has affected the life and thought of our people and played an important role in shaping Indian culture. Valmiki was the Adikavi, the first poet, and his Ramayana the Adikavya, the first poem. While remembering the man's work, we must not forget the man. How he wrote the Ramayana, and under what conditions, is itself an absorbing story. This version is based on Valmiki Ramayana and Vallathol's Malayalam translation.

SAYINGS OF VALMIKI

- The mind is the cause for the direction of all senses leading to good and evil acts.
- Honour the wives of others and protect them, O Ravana, as you will your own. Set an example by loving your own wife.
- Kindness is a supreme virtue.
- Great men when they undertake to do a great deed, are never upset.
- They are the blessed, who by their wisdom, can control their anger, even as water subdues a conflagration.
- Whoever does anything with enthusiasm rarely fails to achieve his object.



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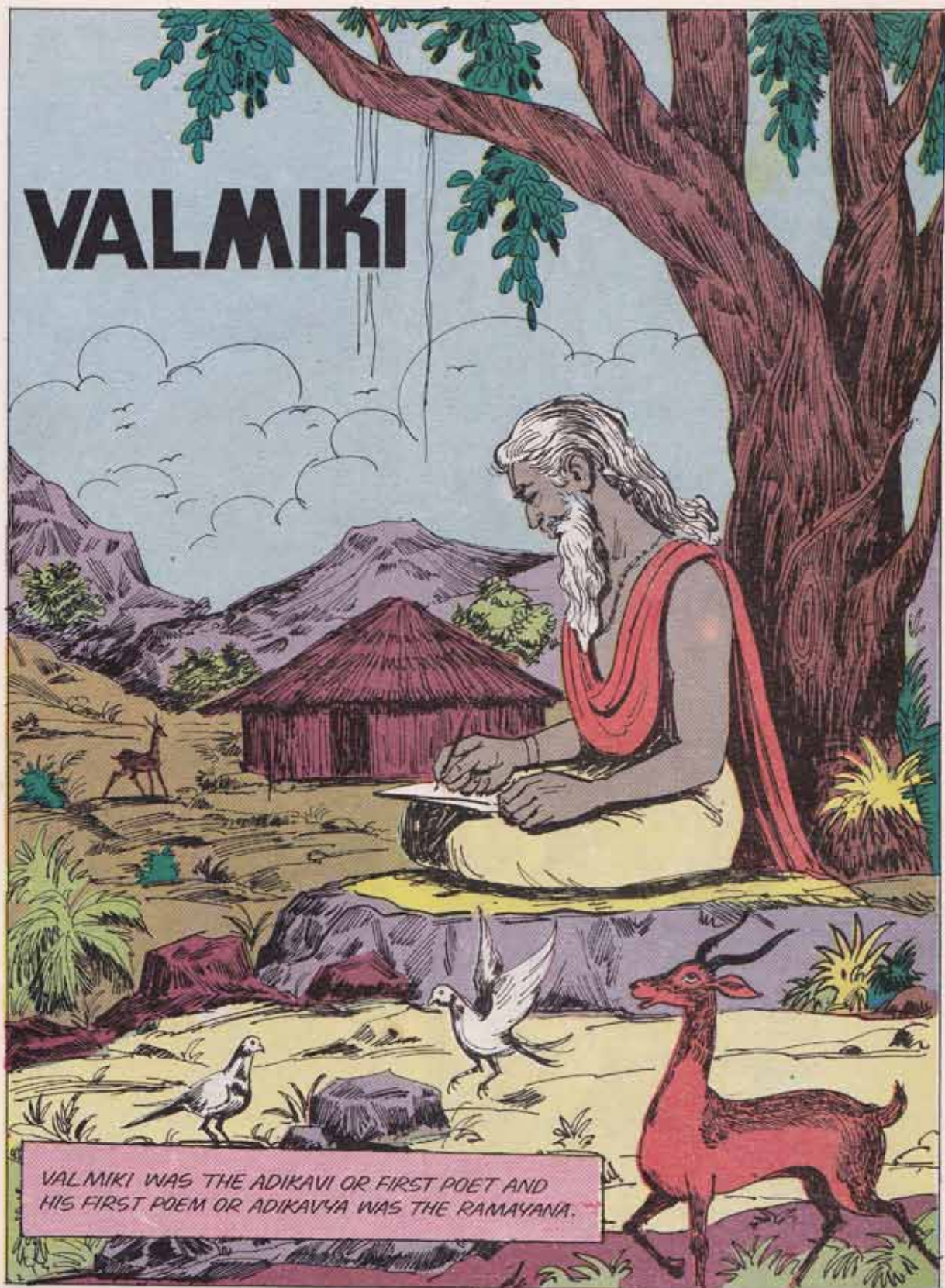
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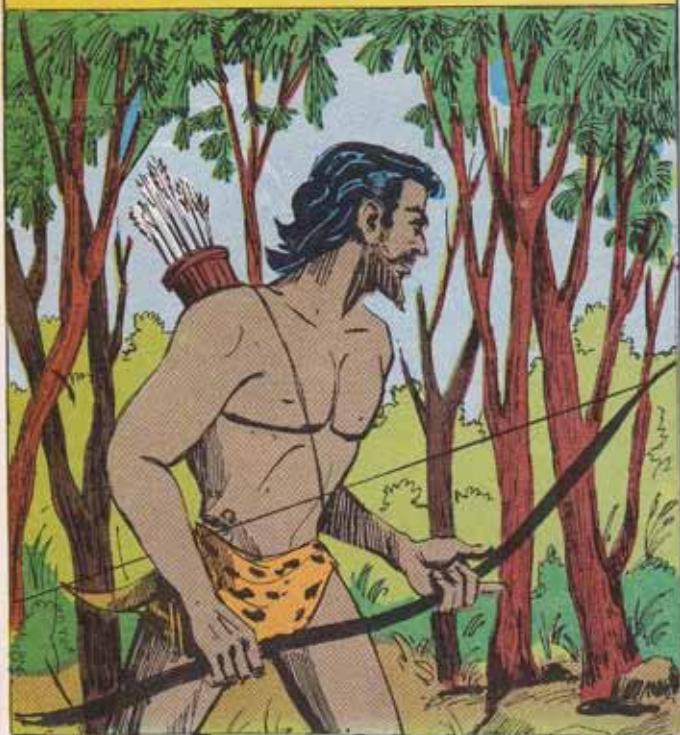
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VALMIKI



VALMIKI WAS THE ADIKAVI OR FIRST POET AND
HIS FIRST POEM OR ADIKAVYA WAS THE RAMAYANA.

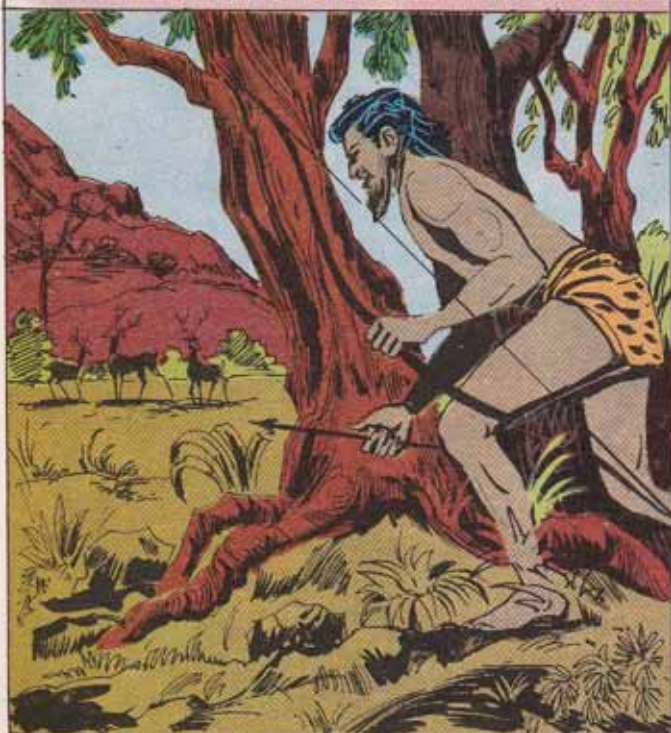
STRANGELY, VALMIKI WAS A HUNTER AND ROBBER IN HIS EARLY LIFE.



ROAMING THE JUNGLE HE SHOT DOWN HARMLESS BIRDS.



HE KILLED GENTLE ANIMALS...



... AND BROUGHT THE CARCASSES HOME FOR FOOD.



HE ALSO WAYLAID AND ROBBED LONE TRAVELLERS IN THE JUNGLE.



HAND OVER THAT
BUNDLE OR ELSE
I WILL KILL YOU.

HAVE MERCY.
SPARE ME.



HERE IS
TODAY'S
LOOT.

IS
THAT
ALL?



BE PATIENT.
A GROUP OF RICH
MERCHANTS WILL BE
PASSING THROUGH THE
JUNGLE TOMORROW.



THUS HE LIVED A LIFE OF VIOLENCE AND CRIME. ONE DAY HE SAW FROM A DISTANCE THE SAPTARISHIS OR SEVEN GREAT SAGES.

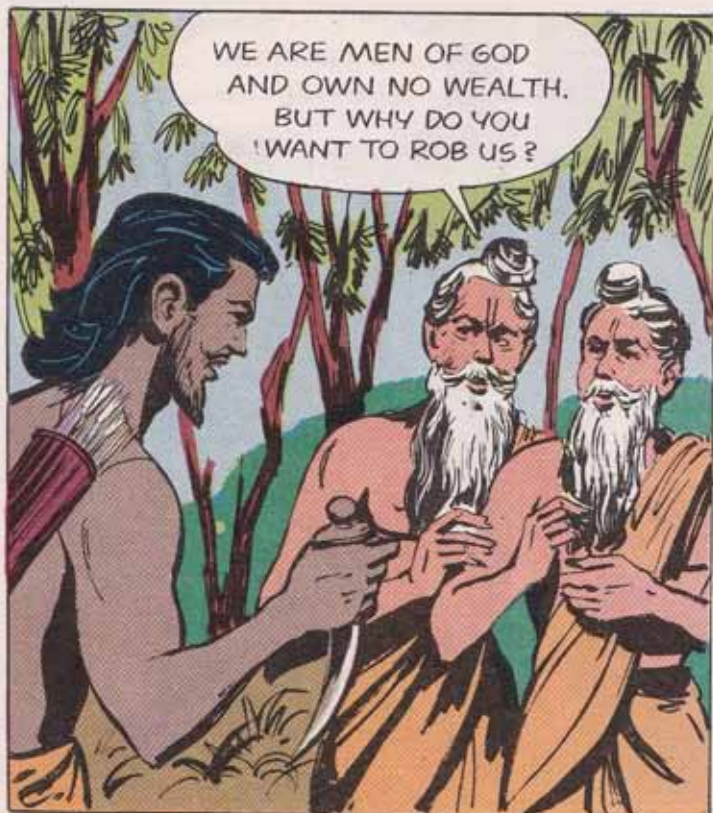


STOP, IF YOU
LOVE YOUR
LIVES!



WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

ALL THE WEALTH
THAT YOU
HAVE ON YOU.



WE ARE MEN OF GOD
AND OWN NO WEALTH.
BUT WHY DO YOU
'WANT TO ROB US?

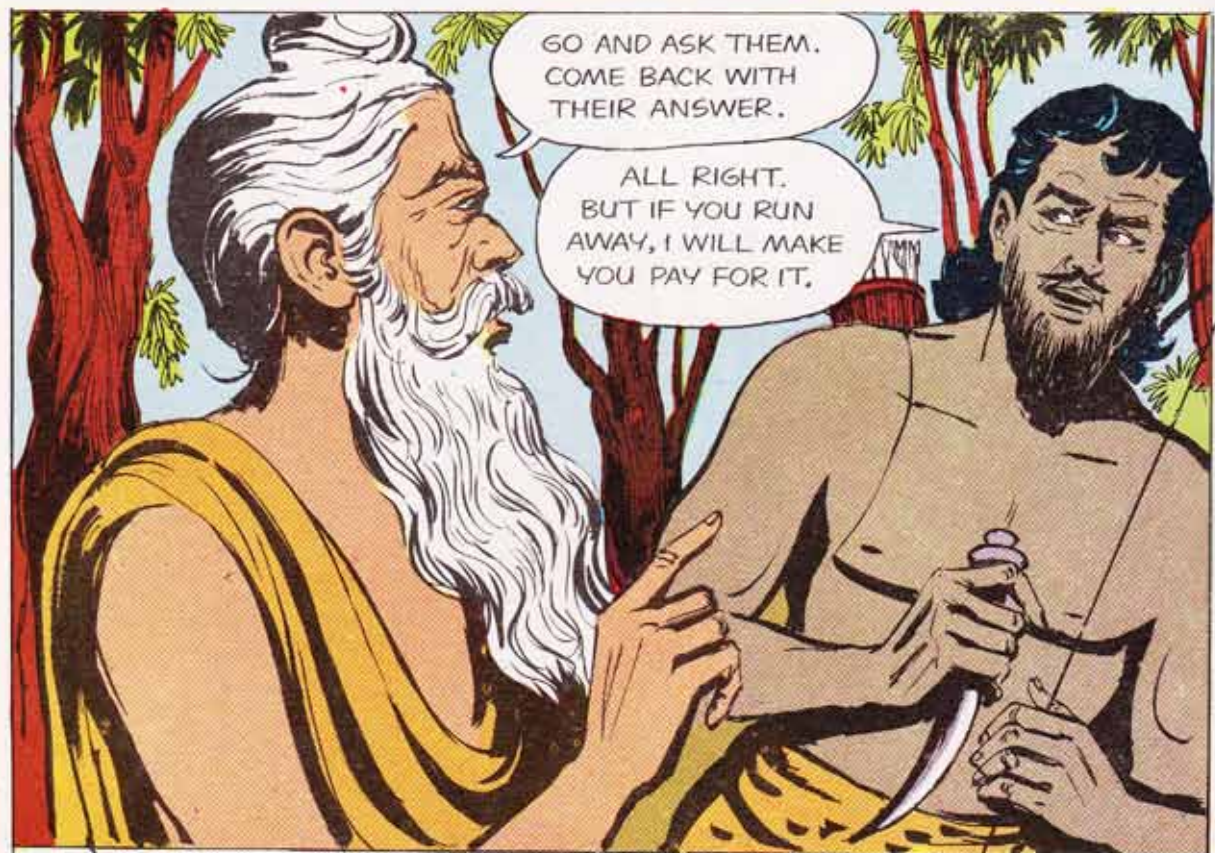
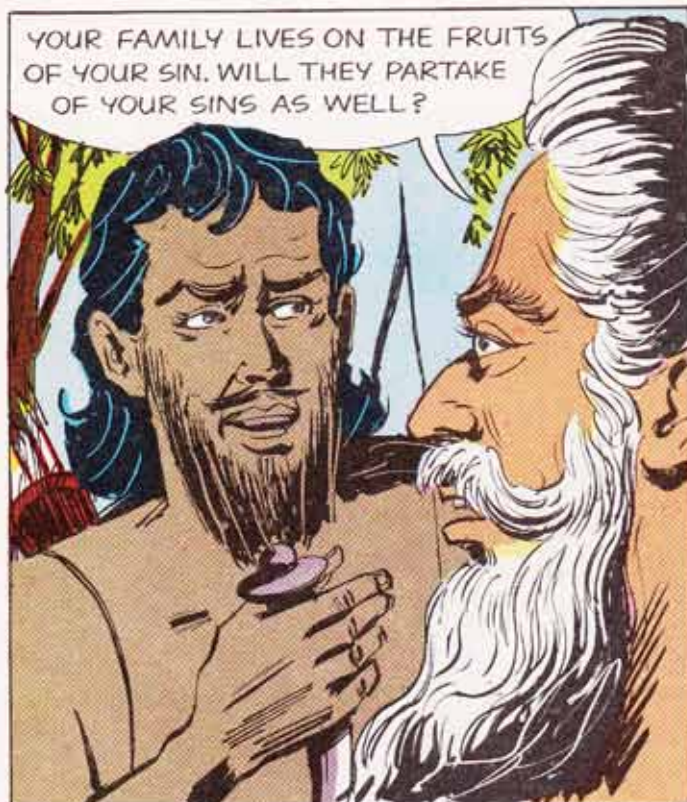


I HAVE TO MAINTAIN MY WIFE
AND CHILDREN. ROBBERY IS MY
MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD.

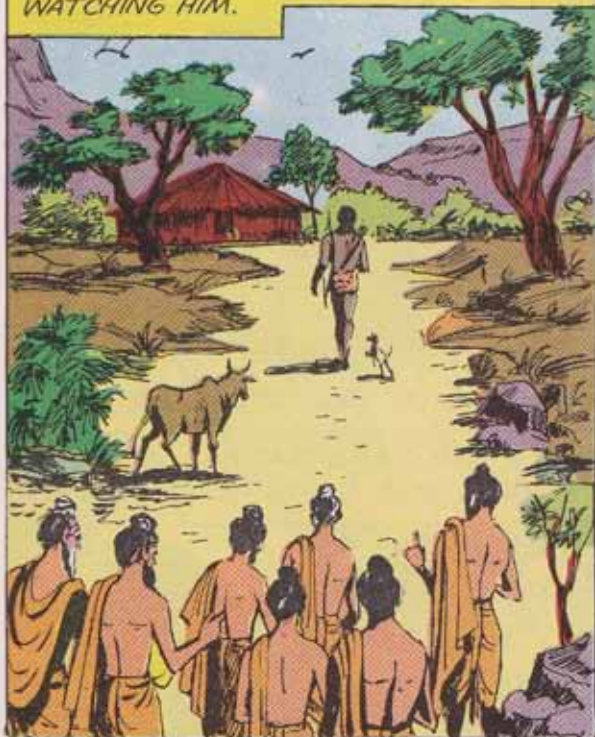


BUT FIRST
WILL YOU ANSWER
MY QUESTION?

OUT WITH
IT! AND BE
QUICK.



THE ROBBER WALKED TOWARDS HIS HUT WHILE THE RISHIS STOOD WATCHING HIM.



INSIDE THE HUT...

DEAR WIFE, YOU BENEFIT FROM MY SINFUL LIFE. DON'T YOU?

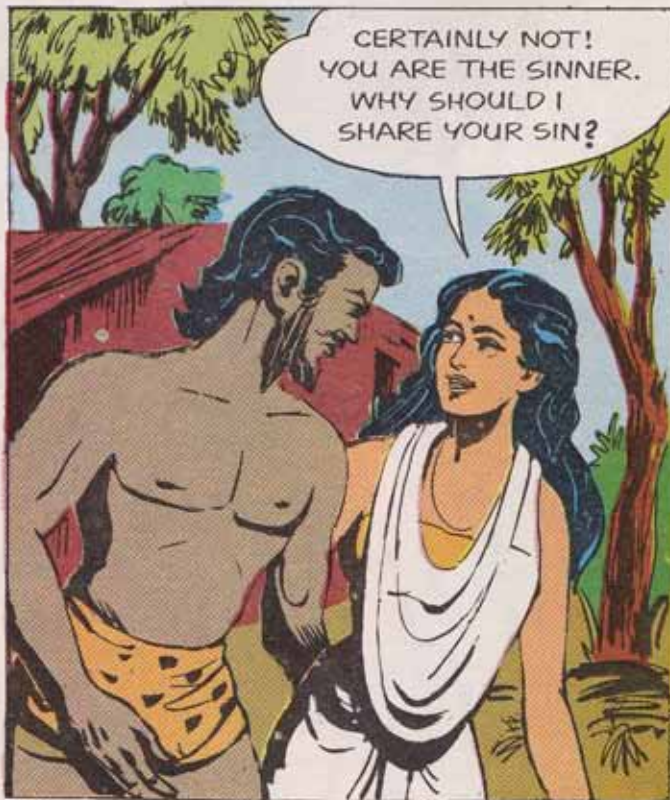
OF COURSE, I DO. WHAT OF THAT?



YOU WILL SHARE MY SINS; WON'T YOU?



CERTAINLY NOT! YOU ARE THE SINNER. WHY SHOULD I SHARE YOUR SIN?



THE ROBBER TURNED HOPEFULLY TO HIS SON.



THE ROBBER COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS EARS. HE STOOD STUNNED AND DAZED.



BENDING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF SORROW, HE WENT OUT WITH FALTERING STEPS.



AS HE CAME NEAR THEM HE BURST INTO TEARS.



WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU?



THE ROBBER TOLD THEM, AND THEN THREW HIMSELF AT THEIR FEET WEeping BITTERLY.

MY SOUL IS LOST.
REDEEM IT, O
COMPASSIONATE
ONES.



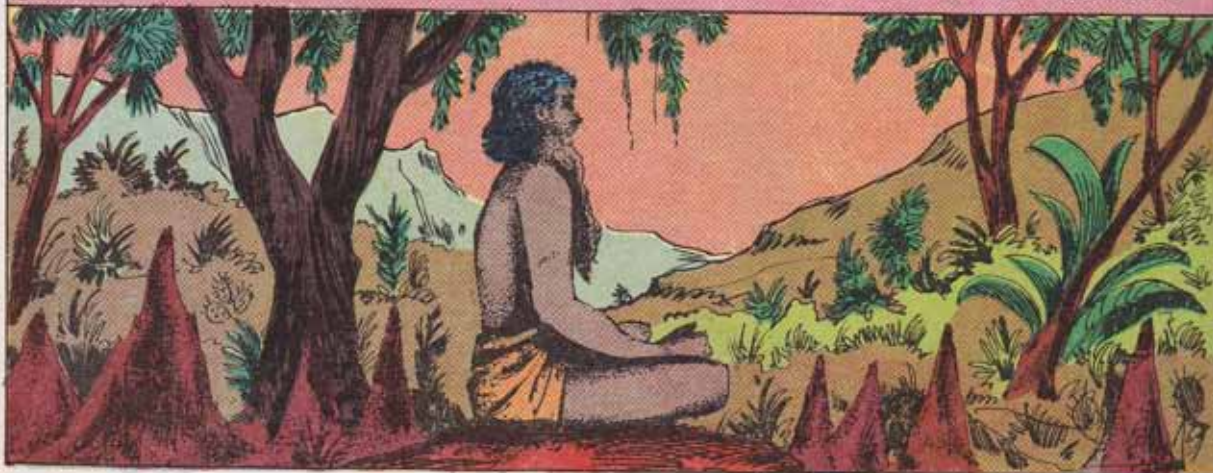
THE RISHIS TOOK PITY ON HIM.



THEREUPON THE ROBBER SQUATTED ON THE GROUND, CLOSED HIS EYES, AND FORGETTING HIMSELF BEGAN RECITING 'MA-RA' WHICH ACTUALLY WAS 'RAMA' INVERTED.



MONTHS PASSED INTO YEARS, AND STILL HE SAT UNMOVING. AROUND HIM AN ANTHILL WAS FORMING ITSELF. TIME ROLLED ON AND THE ANTHILL COVERED HIM COMPLETELY.



AT LAST ONE DAY THE SEVEN RISHIS RETURNED TO THE PLACE.



NOW COME OUT INTO THE OPEN.



THE ANTHILL BURST OPEN AND OUT STEPPED A PERSON DIFFERENT IN EVERY RESPECT.

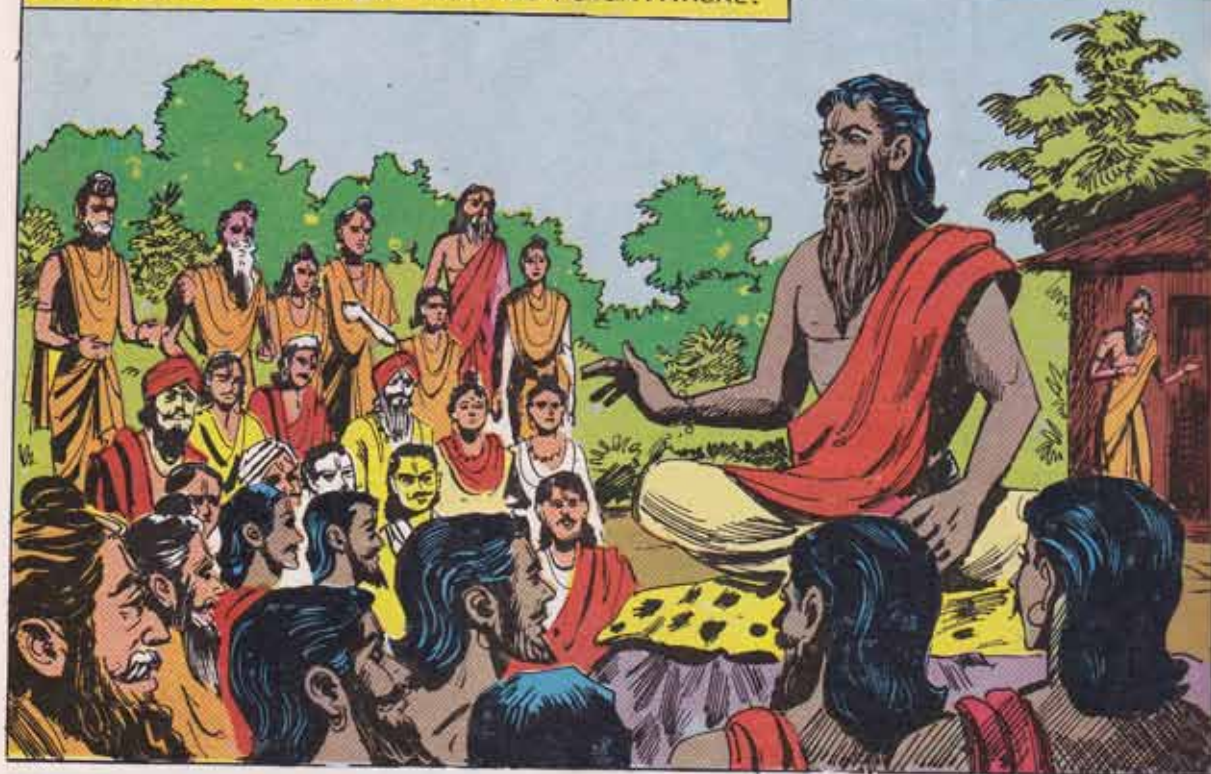
TO LORD RAMA THE MIRACLE IS DUE, AND TO YOU, O GREAT RISHIS.

AMONG THE GREATEST RISHIS YOU ARE ONE, O VALMIKI. AND GREATER GLORY AWAITS YOU.



HE CAME OUT OF "VALMIK" MEANING ANTHILL. AND SO THE RISHIS CALLED HIM BY THE NEW NAME OF "VALMIKI".

THEREAFTER VALMIKI BECAUSE OF HIS SPIRITUAL POWER AND KNOWLEDGE EARNED THE RESPECT OF HOLY MEN EVERYWHERE.



LONG AFTERWARDS MAHA RISHI NARADA PAID HIM A VISIT.



THEY ENGAGED THEMSELVES IN CON-
VERSATION.

WHO AMONG MEN,
IS THE MOST PERFECT
ONE, O NARADA?

RAMA WHO
IS THE
PRESENT KING
OF AYODHYA.



LET ME TELL YOU
THE WONDERFUL
STORY OF RAMA.

PLEASE BEGIN.
I AM IMPATIENT TO
HEAR IT.



SO NARADA NARRATED RAMA'S STORY.

I HAVE TOLD
YOU ALL I KNOW.

WHAT A FASCINATING
STORY. I AM GRATEFUL
TO YOU,
O NARADA.



NARADA TOOK LEAVE OF VALMIKI.



EVER AFTER, THE STORY REMAINED FRESH IN VALMIKI'S MIND, JUST AS HE HAD HEARD IT.

ALL THE TIME I CAN THINK OF NOTHING ELSE. STRANGE INDEED.

HE CALLED ONE OF HIS PUPILS.

I AM GOING TO THE TAMASA RIVER FOR A BATH. COME WITH ME.

LEAD MASTER, I FOLLOW.

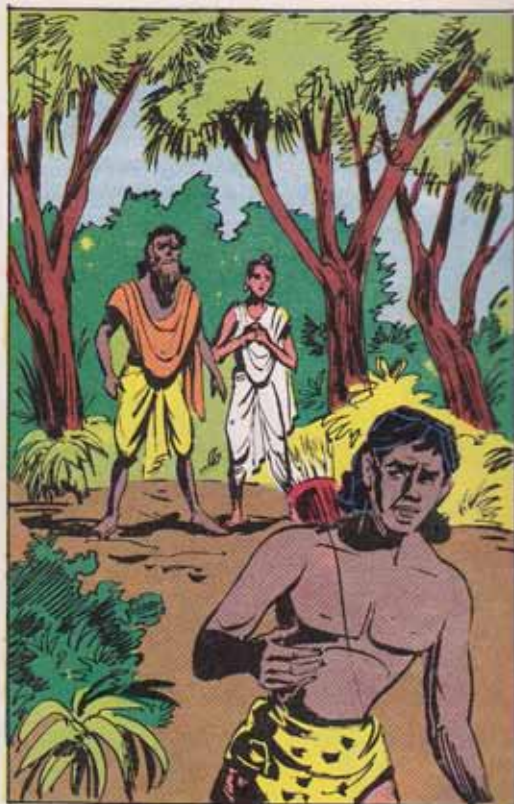
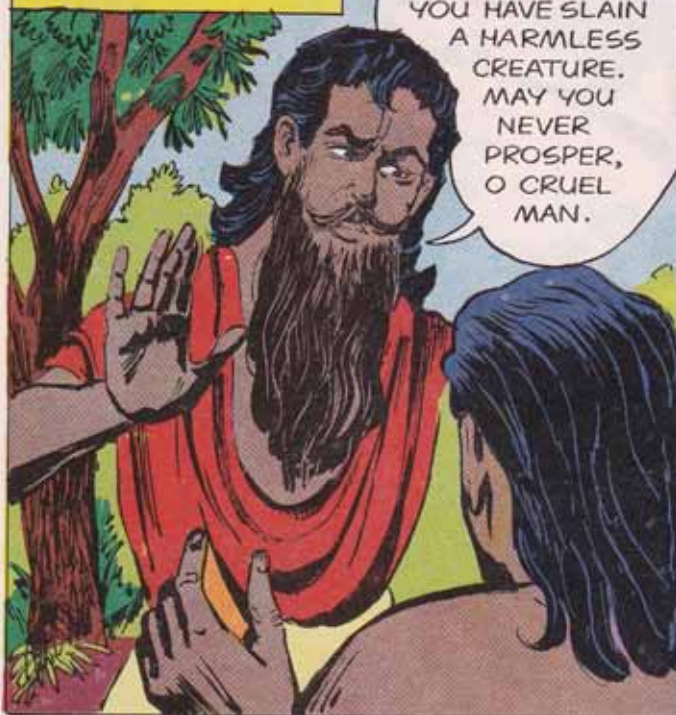
AFTER THEY HAD COVERED SOME DISTANCE...

LOOK, NATURE HAS DECKED HERSELF IN ALL HER FINERY.

ON THE BRANCH OF A TREE SAT TWO BIRDS. HUSBAND AND WIFE, BILLING AND COOING.



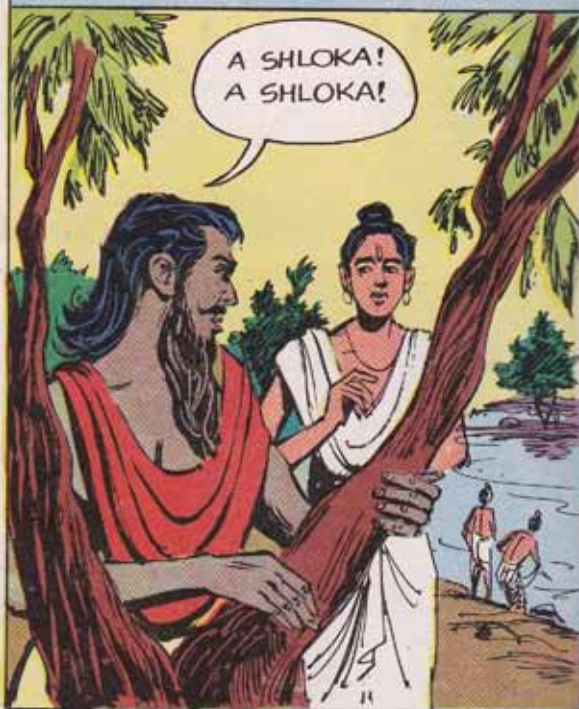
IN HIS GRIEF VALMIKI CURSED THE HUNTER.



VALMIKI'S UTTERANCE WHICH WAS IN SANSKRIT, CAME OUT IN VERSE WITH MELODY AND RHYTHM.



THUS CAME INTO BEING THE FIRST STANZA EVER. AS IT AROSE FROM HIS "SHOKA" OR GRIEF HE CALLED IT "SHLOKA"



THAT DAY HE HAD A VISITOR - BRAHMA
THE CREATOR HIMSELF.

BLESSED
INDEED ARE
YOU,
O VALMIKI.

LORD,
I AM
OVERWHELMED.



EVERYTHING
HAS HAPPENED
AS DECREED BY
ME.

WHAT MAY
YOUR PURPOSE
BE, LORD?



YOU HAVE HEARD RAMA'S
STORY FROM NARADA. WRITE
WHAT YOU KNOW AND ALSO WHAT
IS UNKNOWN TO YOU.



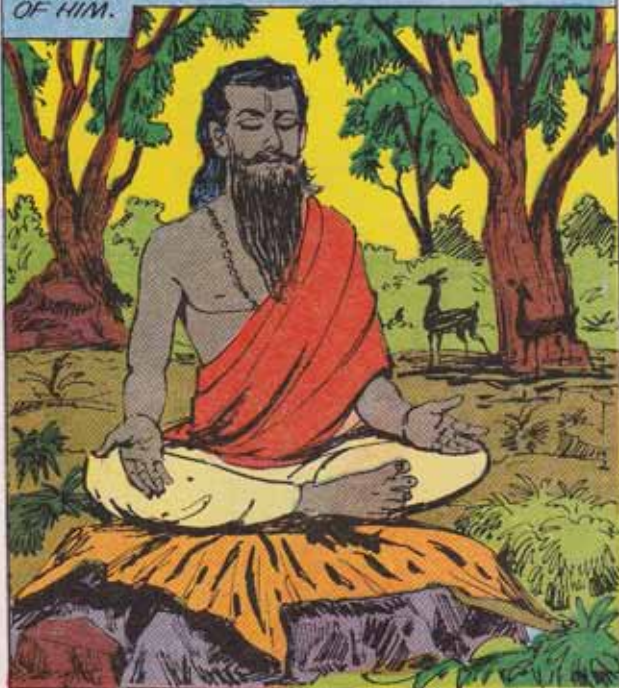
BUT LORD,
HOW CAN I
WRITE ABOUT
THINGS
I DON'T
KNOW?



WHATEVER KNOWLEDGE YOU DO NOT POSSESS
SHALL BE REVEALED TO YOU, AS LONG AS MOUNTAINS
AND SEAS EXIST ON EARTH, SO LONG WILL
YOUR RAMAYANA
LIVE.

SO BE
IT,
LORD.

VALMIKI SAT IN YOGIC MEDITATION. HE
SAW EVERY INCIDENT IN THE RAMAYANA
AS IF IT WERE HAPPENING JUST IN FRONT
OF HIM.



RAMA'S
CORONATION.

AH, HOW
CLEAR IS MY
VISION.



AFTERWARDS HE WROTE THE GLORIOUS
EPIC, RAMAYANA, IN VERSE.

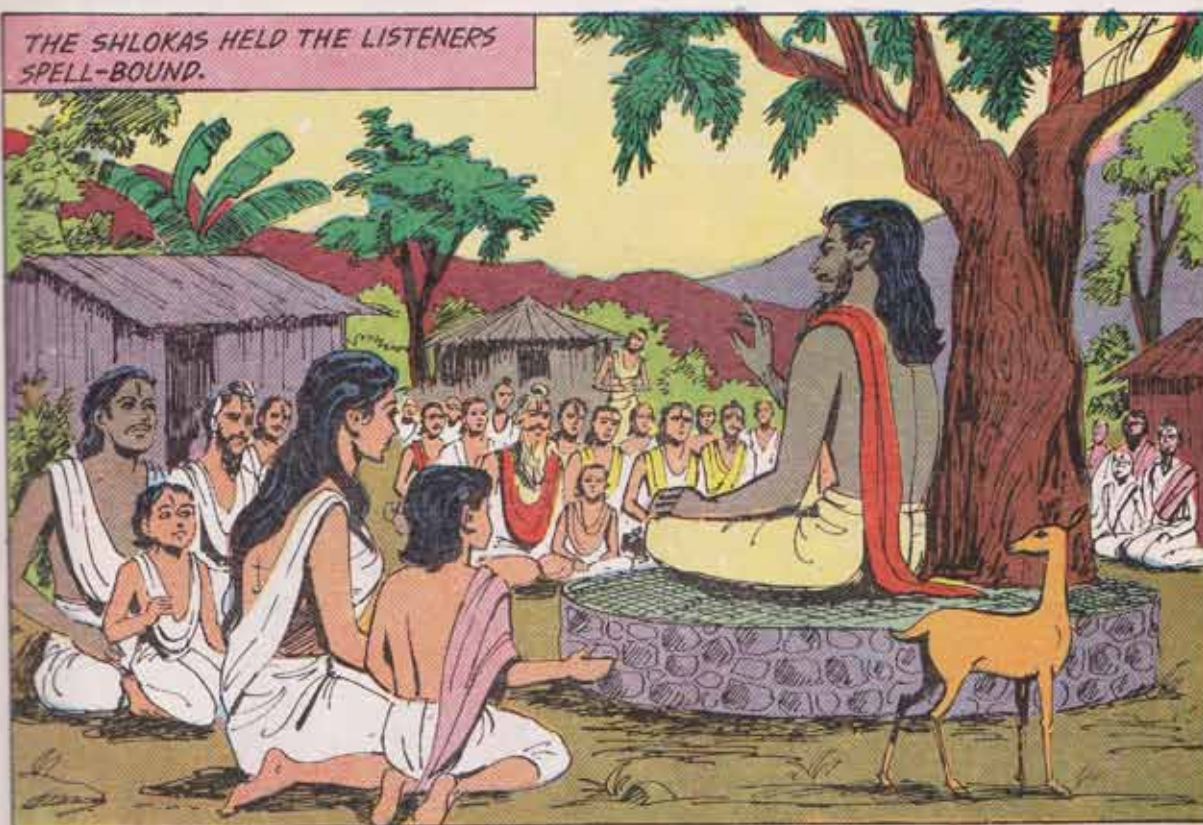


OUR
MASTER HAS
FINISHED THE
RAMAYANA.

WILL HE
READ IT OUT
TO US?



THE SHLOKAS HELD THE LISTENERS
SPELL-BOUND.



YEARS LATER, SOME DISCIPLES WENT DEEP INTO THE WOODS. THERE THEY FOUND A WOMAN LYING ON THE GROUND AND CRYING AS IF HER HEART WOULD BREAK.



THEY HURRIED BACK TO THE HERMITAGE.



VALMIKI'S SPIRITUAL INSIGHT TOLD HIM WHO THE LADY WAS.



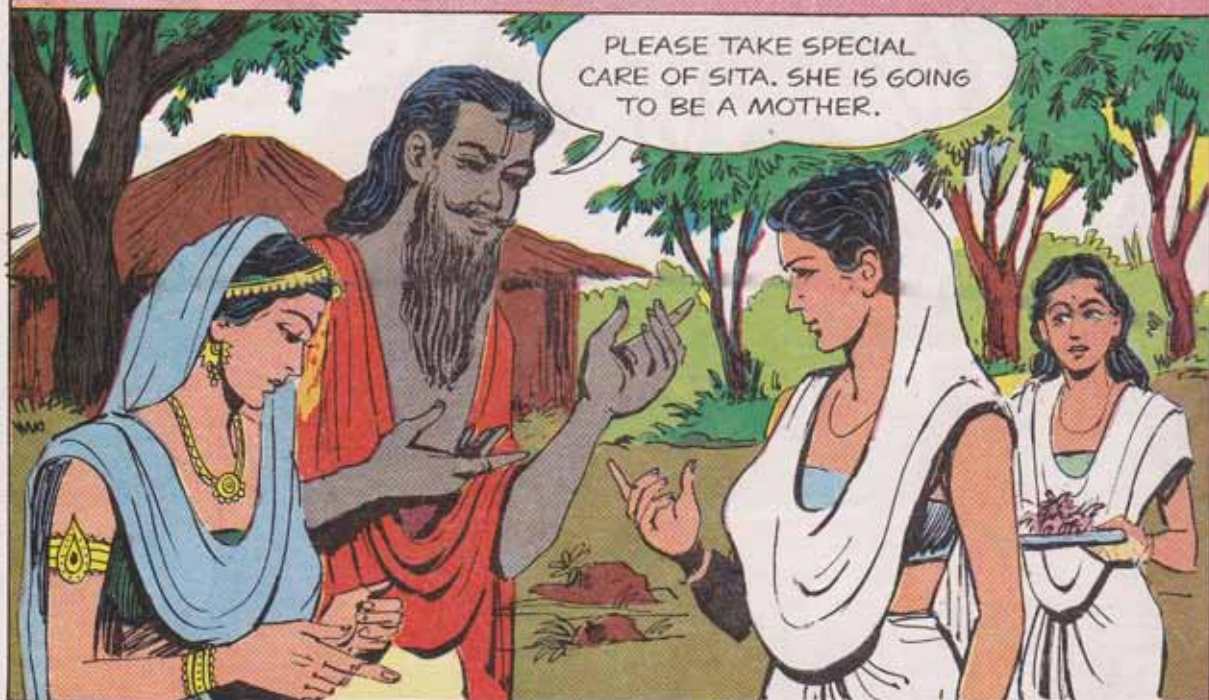
THE RISHI HURRIED TO THE PLACE WHERE SITA LAY.



SITA WHO HAD BEEN ABANDONED IN THE FOREST BY RAMA FOUND A BENEFACITOR IN VALMIKI.



VALMIKI ENTRUSTED SITA TO THE CARE OF FEMALE ASCETICS IN THE HERMITAGE.



PLEASE TAKE SPECIAL CARE OF SITA. SHE IS GOING TO BE A MOTHER.

IN DUE COURSE SITA WAS BLESSED WITH TWINS.



THE BOYS, LUV AND KUSH WERE BROUGHT UP BY VALMIKI AND EDUCATED BY HIM.



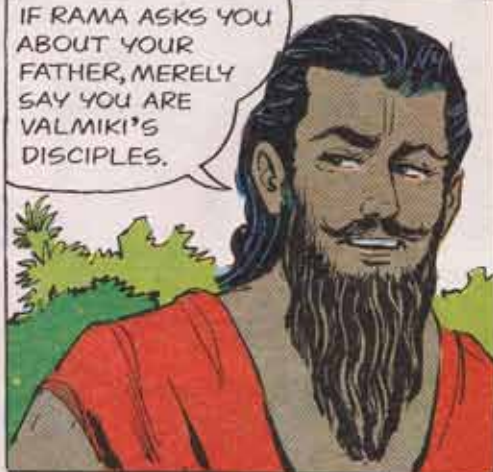
AMONG THE MANY THINGS HE TAUGHT THEM WAS TO RECITE THE RAMAYANA TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE VEENA.



ONE DAY NEWS CAME THAT RAMA WAS PERFORMING THE ASHWAMEDHA OR HORSE-SACRIFICE.



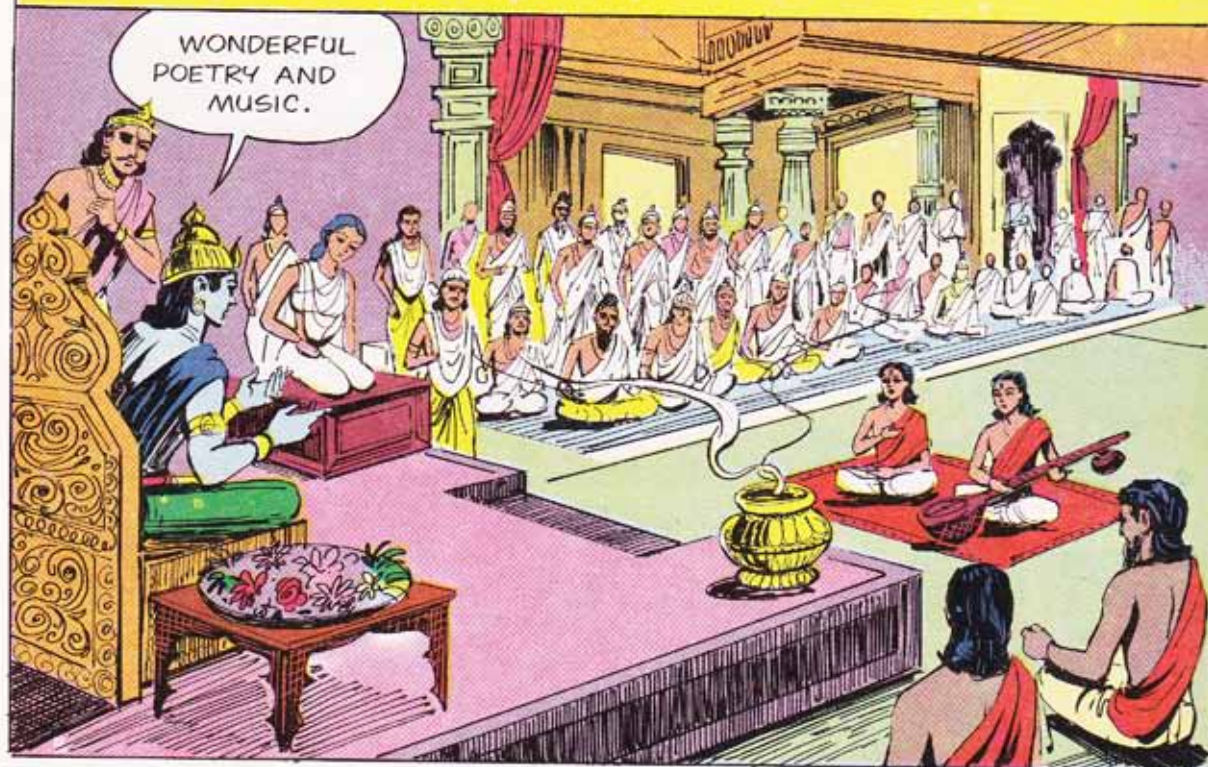
IF RAMA ASKS YOU ABOUT YOUR FATHER, MERELY SAY YOU ARE VALMIKI'S DISCIPLES.



LUV AND KUSH WENT TO NAIMISHA, THE VENUE OF THE SACRIFICE.



RAMA AND THE ASSEMBLY WERE ENTRANCED BY THE SINGING OF THE BOYS.



CHILDREN, WHO COMPOSED THIS GREAT POEM?

OUR MASTER VALMIKI!



WHO IS YOUR FATHER?

WE ARE DISCIPLES OF VALMIKI.



RAMA GAVE AN ORDER TO HIS MINISTER.

I AM MIGHTILY PLEASD WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE BOYS. GIVE THEM EIGHTEEN THOUSAND GOLD COINS.



WE DO NOT ACCEPT MONEY. WE ARE GOING.



LATER THE TRUTH DAWNED ON RAMA.

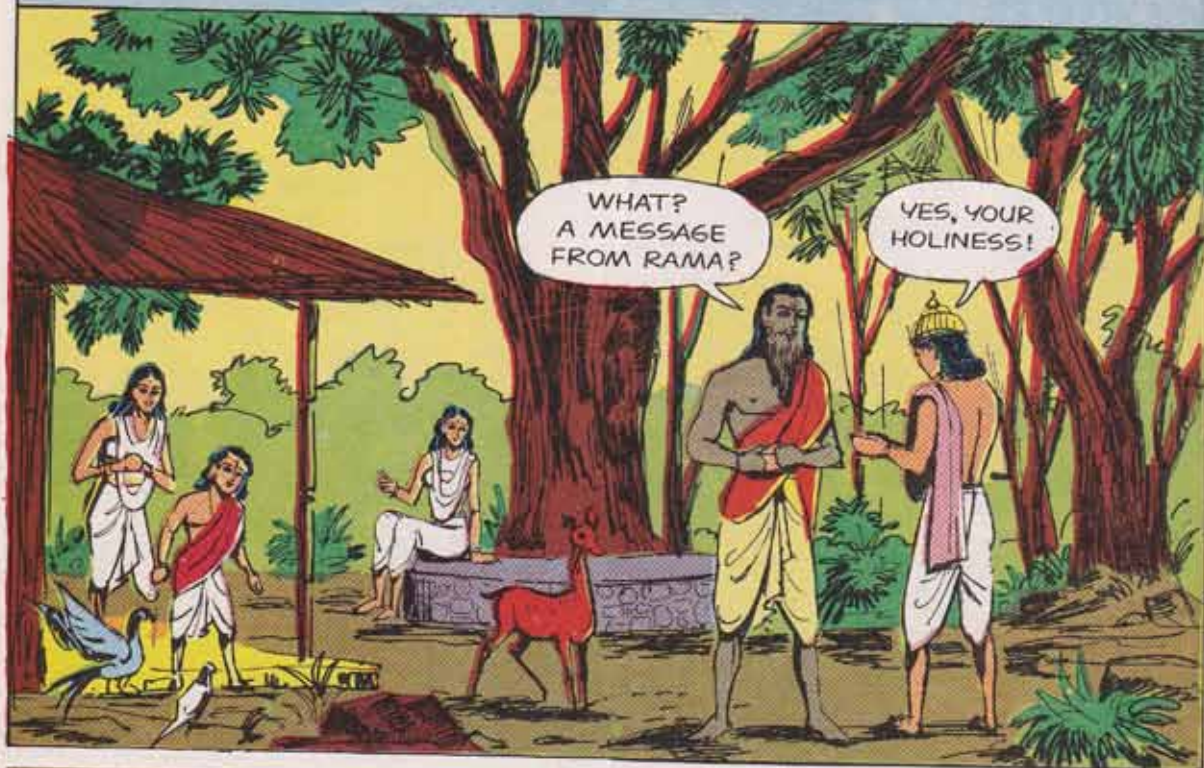
THE BOYS ARE MY OWN SONS! SITA IS THEIR MOTHER. I WILL SEND FOR SITA.



MEET VALMIKI AND GIVE HIM THIS MESSAGE.

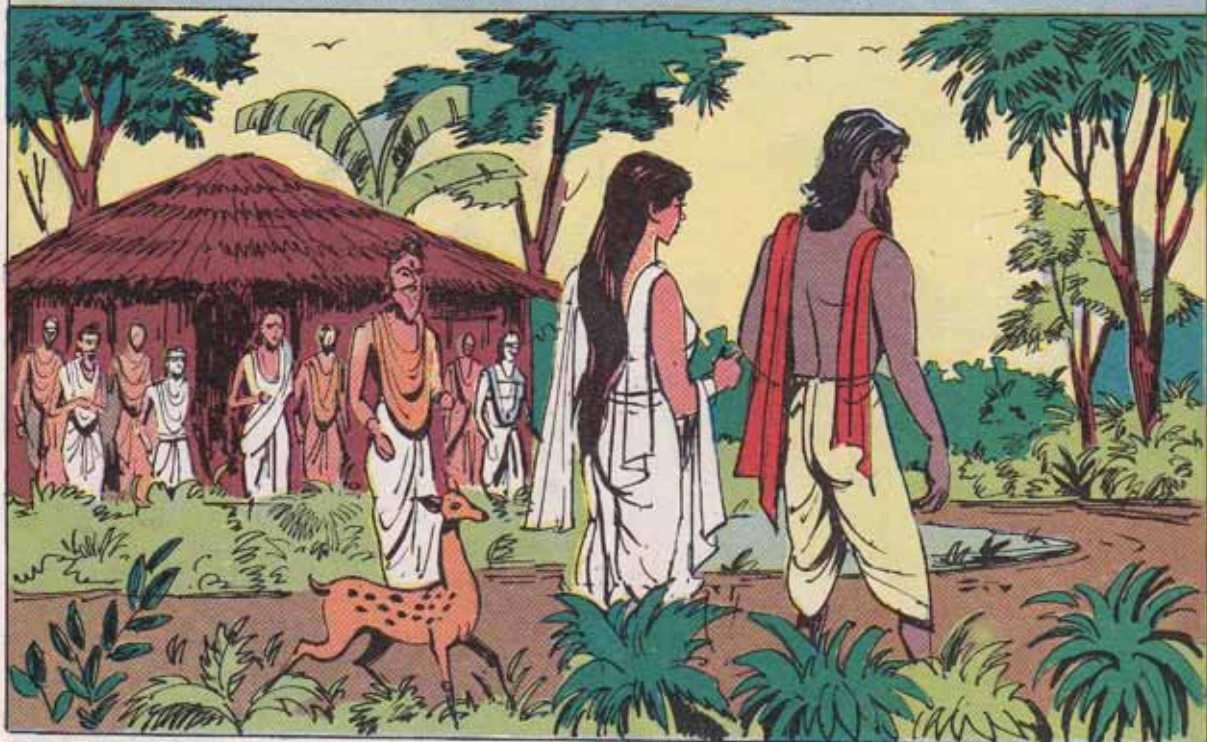


THE MESSENGER MET VALMIKI AT HIS HERMITAGE.

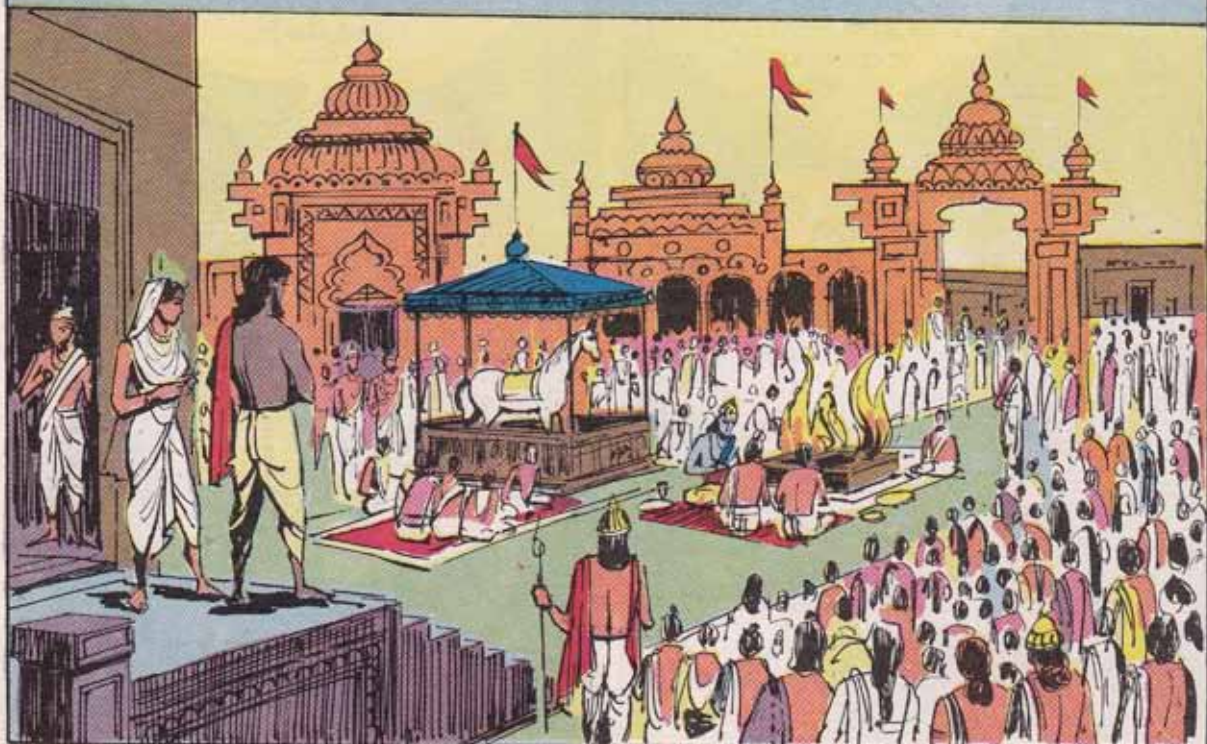


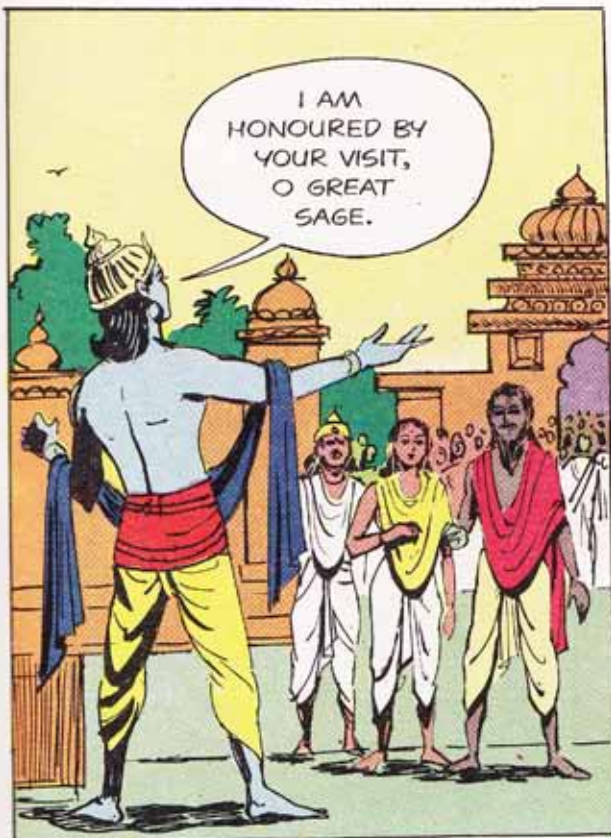


THE INMATES OF THE HERMITAGE BADE SITA A TEARFUL FAREWELL.

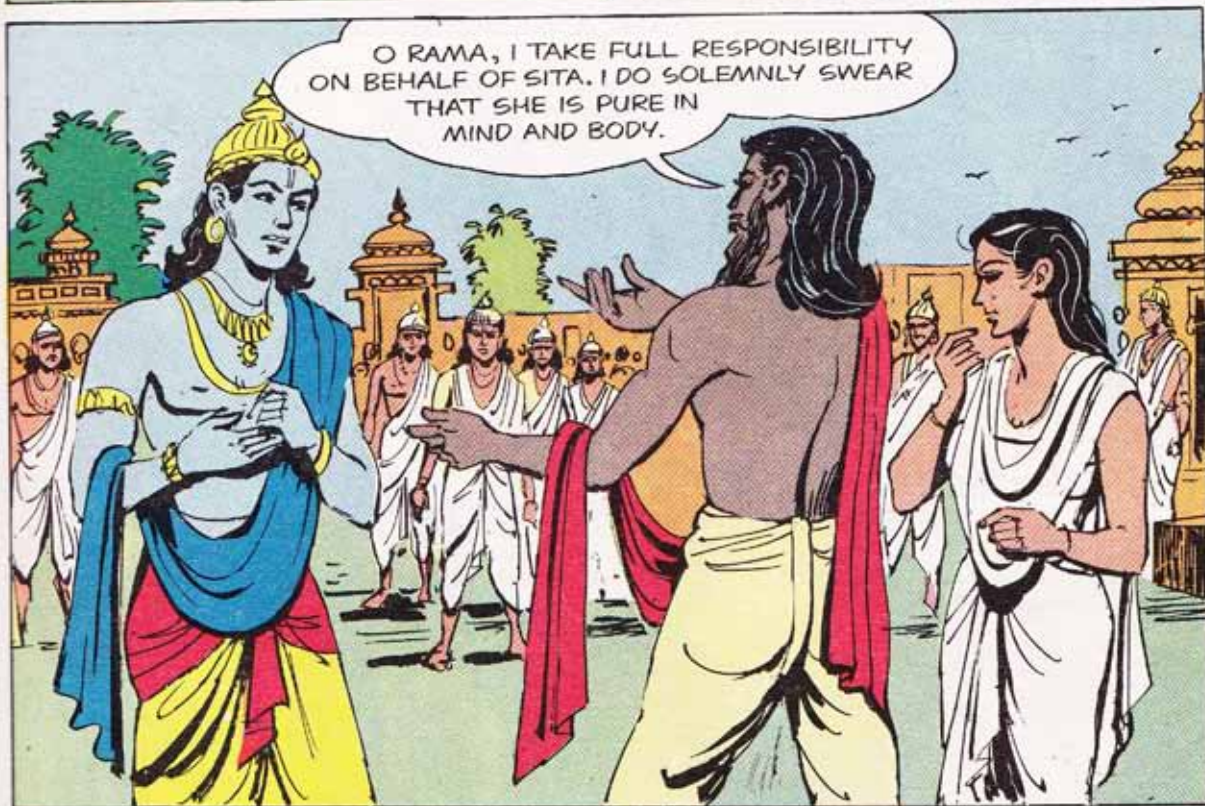


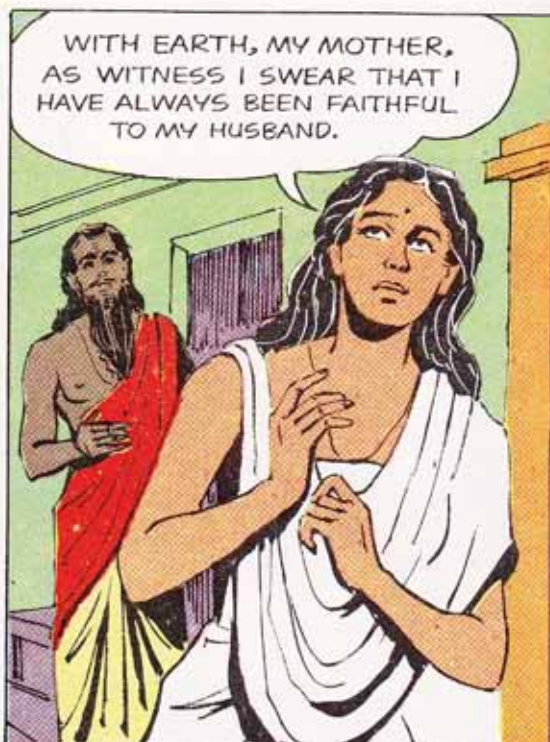
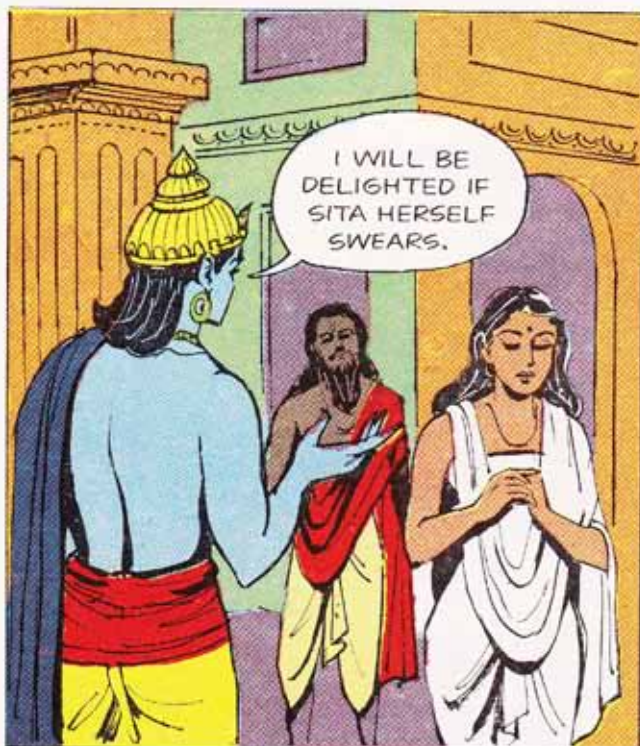
THEY ARRIVED AT THE VENUE OF RAMA'S ASHWAMEDHA SACRIFICE.





ALL EYES NOW TURNED TOWARDS VALMIKI AND SITA.





AND THEN A MIRACLE TOOK PLACE. THE EARTH OPENED BY ITSELF AND UP CAME BHOOMI DEVI SITTING ON HER THRONE.



THE GODDESS OF EARTH LIFTED SITA TO THE THRONE AND DISAPPEARED DOWN THE OPENING WITH HER.

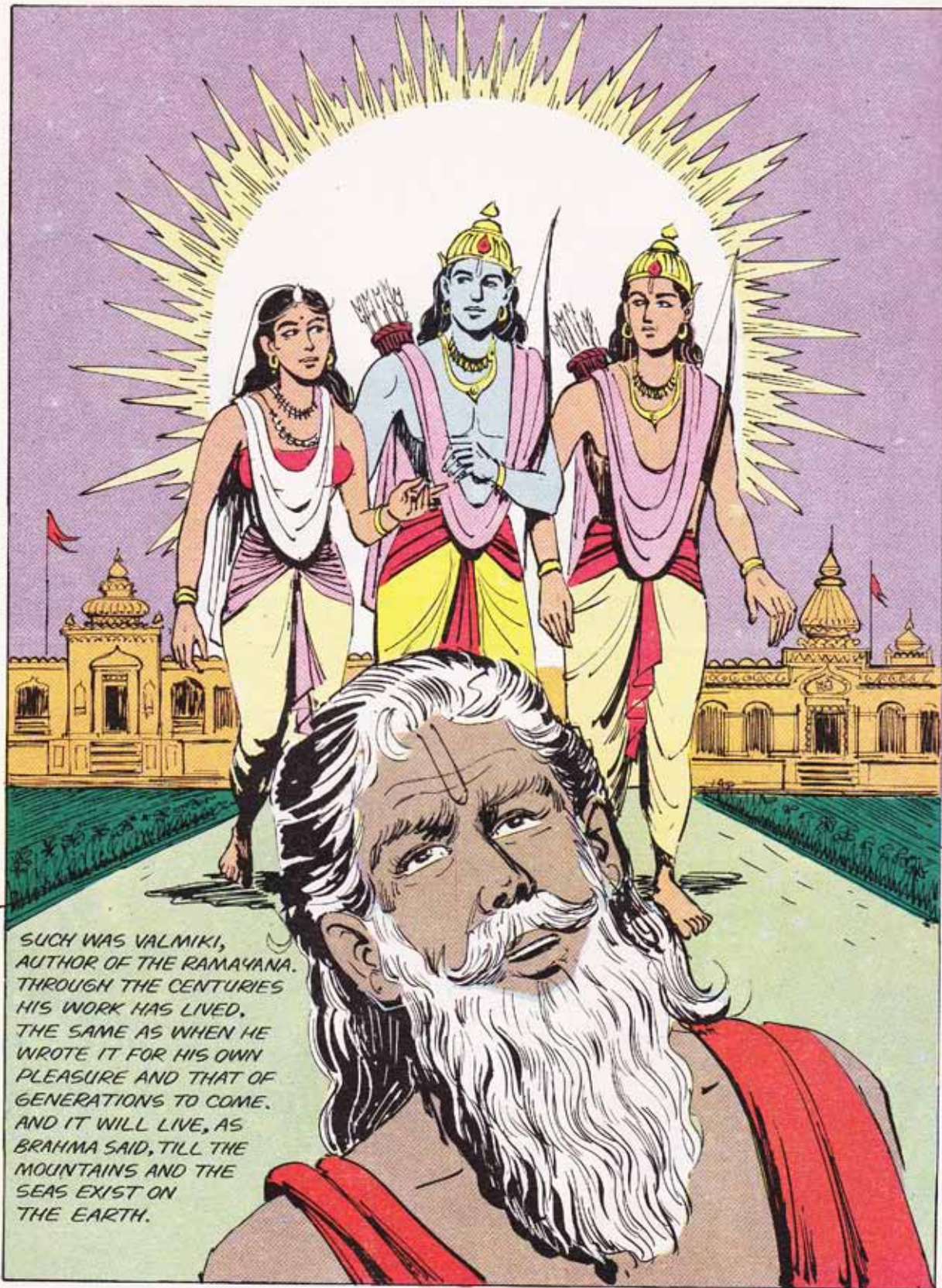


SITA!
MY SITA!



AND VALMIKI LEFT THE SCENE OF THE SACRIFICE FOR HIS HERMITAGE TO CONTINUE HIS ASCETIC LIFE.





SUCH WAS VALMIKI,
AUTHOR OF THE RAMAYANA.
THROUGH THE CENTURIES
HIS WORK HAS LIVED.
THE SAME AS WHEN HE
WROTE IT FOR HIS OWN
PLEASURE AND THAT OF
GENERATIONS TO COME.
AND IT WILL LIVE, AS
BRAHMA SAID, TILL THE
MOUNTAINS AND THE
SEAS EXIST ON
THE EARTH.



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